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2. The Secretary of the House Chamber of Labor, Mario Brandani, then spoke. He gave the percentages of those on strike, which were particularly high among the local para-Governmental and hospital employees. These, according to Brandani, had achieved almost total abstention from work. To these categories, Brandani addressed words of encouragement for associating themselves with the action of the State employees. He mentioned the attempt of the Government to isolate the various categories in order to be able to dominate them more easily and concluded by stating that the right to strike, granted by the Constitution of the Republic, is already an inalienable right even for the State employees.
3. After a few words of support to the protest meeting on the part of the representative of the autonomous syndicates of State employees a certain Giovagnoli, Christian Democratic Deputy Giulio Pastore spoke. He explained that he wanted to examine the situation and refrain from problems or subjects of a political nature. After having given the story of the negotiations which had been carried on for five months with the Government authorities for the purpose of achieving the much-sought-for economic improvements, he then explained the absolute inadequacy of the increases proposed by the Government with regard to the elementary needs of civilian life and he refuted the usual arguments with which it is sought to justify the economic inopportunity to grant the increases in wages. According to Pastore, the concept that the increase of wages could provoke an increase in the cost of living is erroneous. "This affirmation, advanced as an opposition argument," said Pastore, "has the sole purpose of inculcating fear into those concerned, in order that they refrain from advancing their request for improvement and to produce the same effect on others in order that they show aversion or indifference to the adjustment of salaries.

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"This latter result has unfortunately occurred in much of the press. Another common argument," stated Pastore, "is that of the so-called lack of funds. In fact, several months ago, the Government stated that there was not a single lire available in the State Treasury to give to the State employees, but with the change of Ministers, 45 billions were found."

4. Then Pastore spoke of the decision by the syndical organizations to strike and he firmly refuted the existence of any political influence in the initiative, lamenting that even on this occasion the Government had not failed to exploit the situation politically. Referring to the criticism lodged against the decision for the strike and replying to a Turin paper which allegedly wrote that it would be desirable to table negotiations before striking, Pastore repeated what he had said before, that for five months negotiations had been underway and that it was not possible to accept 1,000 lire monthly increase without profoundly affecting the dignity of those who work. Pastore stated that an issue was made of the alleged enormity of a railroad strike for 24 hours claiming that a strike of that duration did not have any precedent in recent times. Pastore pointed out, however, that this allegation was false; that in March 1951 a railroad strike in France was carried out for several days.
5. Pastore, along the theme of the preceding speaker, sustained the principle of the right of State employees to strike and stated substantially: "If a strike is held before decisions are taken by Parliament, we are accused of influencing Parliament; but if the strike is held after a decision is taken, we are accused of rebelling against Parliament. Then, when should one strike?"
6. Pastore underlined once again the absolute lack of political influence in the current syndical action and the spontaneous solidarity of the decision to strike, shown by the various organizations in the various provincial representations. "As a result of this solidarity," stated Pastore, "Deputy La Pira telephoned me to have the strike put off." Pastore had to reply in the negative since, of the 92 provinces, 62 had communicated their adherence and only 30 their abstention from participation in the strike. "These 30," added Pastore, "justified their decision on the inexcusable grounds of fear."
7. Pastore then stated that the syndicalists placed their faith in Parliament and reaffirmed once more the right of the civil workers to strike. Then he re-emphasized the insufficient increase granted by the Government and the necessity of improving the tenor of life of the workers at a moment when, as opposed to the daily misery and sacrifices of those who serve the State, one must observe the glories of the various Ministries. Then he concluded that the syndical battle is carried on with calm nerves, especially when one is sure of oneself, and he exhorted all the organizations to a unified fight which would necessarily lead to victory.
8. Pastore was followed by the representative of the employees of Group "C", an accountant Maretta, who started by praising Pastore's speech. He then proceeded to inveigh against the increases proposed by the Government and against the bureaucracy of the General Accountant's Office of the State who in the compilation of this table, had offended their colleagues. He sustained the necessity of equality of earnings for each grade of every category and, unlike Pastore who not even implicitly requested the application of the sliding scale, insisted upon a mobile scale as the only solution. Then he added that if the State wishes the employees to interest themselves in the successful execution of the administration and to have complete faith in the carrying out of their tasks, it is necessary for the State to meet their elementary needs of life because otherwise it would have an amorphous and insensible mass of employees.
9. He concluded by lamenting the intimidations which, according to him, were carried out by the police that morning, who arrested employees distributing leaflets near the entrances to the offices. Maretta spoke words of praise

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for these victims. He also encouraged the syndical organizations to work for their release. He closed with the usual phrases of certain victory in the syndical battle.

10. At the end of the meeting, Rinaldo Santini read an order of the day with which the Government table was turned down as unacceptable because of the inequity of the increase. He re-affirmed the desire of all State employees to defend the right to strike and asked for the application of the sliding-pay scale. Approximately 2,500 persons took part in the meeting, at which no incident took place.

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